Reviewer’s report

Title: Attempting rigour and replicability in thematic analysis of qualitative research data; a case study of codebook development

Version: 0 Date: 02 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Lorelli Nowell

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review your manuscript on demonstrating rigour in thematic analysis using code book development. You propose that in this paper you will describe code book development and inter rating testing in replicable detail. Although I appreciate the need for explicit tools for researchers to follow, I have a number of concerns and potential suggestions to make this work stronger.

This case study used in to demonstrate the code book development was not mentioned until page 7. Although I understand this was about the methods used and not about the case study itself I think the readers would benefit from a high level overview of the study and where it is currently at (i.e. completed and published or still in analysis stage) early on in the manuscript. I found the case study description later on from page 7-page 11 provided too much detail that was not relevant to the stated goal of describing code book development and inter-rater testing.

On page 4 you state "The goal of this article therefore is to illustrate the 'universal' deficiency of the system". This seems rather out of place and I am unclear what is universal, what is deficient, and which system are you speaking about.

On page 4 you also state your "description of analysis is embedded within the philosophical standpoint of critical realism and pragmatism, which is contrasting those previously described" without previously describing other standpoints or highlighting which standpoints you are referring to.

On page 5 you begin a discussion on the philosophical underpinnings (which are important) but currently span over three pages of the manuscript. I believe this discussion could be tightened substantially to allow more room for discussion of the code book development and processes.

On page 12 line 278 you state the application of inductive approaches allowed for "unexpected themes with the potential to enrich the data to develop during the coding process". Do you mean potential to enrich your analysis or your findings? Enriching your data read like you are adding to the data.

On page 14 line 330 you mention you used a template analytic technique and there are no references to other literature that highlights this method. More detail and perhaps a visual of what the code book looked like at this stage would be helpful.
In your conclusion you state the "the code book improved the ability for intercoder agreement and reliability testing and ensured accuracy of analyses" but I did not read enough detail on how this was done to really get a sense that this was true. If the contribution of this article is code book development and inter rater coding I believe there needs to be far more detail and links to the literature about these processes.

In your limitations you speak about projection and sampling but I am wondering about the limitations of the actual process of code book development. I think this is where the manuscript falls short. I believe more critical analysis of the method itself is needed.

Thanks again for the opportunity the review this manuscript that has the potential to be a useful methodological contribution.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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